

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01  
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15  
ICA-11 HA-05 SMS-01 /082 W  
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R 111811Z SEP 78  
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6661  
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE  
AMEMBASSY BERLIN  
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST  
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST  
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMCONSUL MUNICH  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE  
AMEMBASSY SOFIA  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
USMISSION USNATO  
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MOSCOW 21752

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, CSCE, SHUM, UR  
SUBJECT: A YEAR OF INCREASED JEWISH IMMIGRATION  
SIGNAL OR RESPONSE?

SUMMARY: JEWISH EMIGRATION HAS INCREASED DRAMATICALLY  
OVER THE TWELVE MONTH PERIOD FROM SEPTEMBER 1977 THROUGH  
AUGUST 1978. WHILE THE BELGRADE CSCE REVIEW  
CONFERENCE MIGHT EXPLAIN SEVERAL MONTHS OF THE  
INCREASE, IT HAS CONTINUED SINCE THEN DESPITE  
TENSIONS IN U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS THAT MIGHT HAVE  
BEEN EXPECTED TO PRODUCE A DOWNTURN. SOME OF OUR  
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REFUSENIK SOURCES ARGUE THAT THE INCREASED EMIGRATION  
SHOULD NOT BE SEEN AS A SIGNAL TO THE WEST, BUT  
RATHER AS A RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASED  
APPLICATIONS FOR EXIT PERMISSION STIMULATED BY THE  
HELSINKI AGREEMENT. THEY REASON THAT THE AUTHORI-  
TIES PERMITTED INCREASED EMIGRATION BECAUSE THEY  
WERE NOT PREPARED TO COPE WITH THE MUCH LARGER

REFUSENIK COMMUNITIES THAT WOULD HAVE RESULTED FROM THE HIGH REFUSAL RATE THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN REQUIRED IN ORDER TO RESTRICT EMIGRATION TO THE 1976 LEVEL. THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP OF COURSE RETAINS THE CAPACITY TO MANIPULATE THE EMIGRATION RATE FOR ITS OWN ENDS, PARTICULARLY IN THE SHORT RUN, BUT WE BELIEVE THE REFUSENIK ANALYSIS MERITS ATTENTION BECAUSE IT HIGHLIGHTS THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE SOVIETS MAY HAVE FOUND THAT RESTRICTING EMIGRATION INVOLVES SUBSTANTIAL DOMESTIC AS WELL AS FOREIGN POLICY COSTS. END SUMMARY.

1. JEWISH EMIGRATION EDGED UP GRADUALLY DURING 1977, BUT THE DRAMATIC INCREASE DID NOT OCCUR UNTIL SEPTEMBER OF THAT YEAR, WHEN THE NETHERLANDS EMBASSY IN MOSCOW ISSUED VISAS TO 1,931 PROSPECTIVE ISRAELI IMMIGRANTS, AN INCREASE OF MORE THAN FOUR HUNDRED OVER THE HIGHEST MONTHLY ISSUANCES IN SEVERAL YEARS. IN THE YEAR SINCE, ENDING AUGUST 31, THE NETHERLANDS EMBASSY HAS ISSUED 23,357 VISAS, OR A MONTHLY AVERAGE OF 1,946. THE TREND IN RECENT MONTHS HAS, IF ANYTHING, BEEN UPWARD AND WILL, IF CONTINUED, BRING JEWISH EMIGRATION TOTALS IN 1978 TO WELL OVER 20,000, THE HIGHEST LEVEL SINCE THE PEAK YEAR OF 1973, WHEN 35,000 SOVIET JEWS EMIGRATED.

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2. WE INITIALLY SAW THIS INCREASE AS PREPARING THE GROUND FOR THE BELGRADE CSCE REVIEW MEETING. THE GREATER EMIGRATION HAS CONTINUED, HOWEVER, AND EVEN FURTHER INCREASED IN THE MONTHS SINCE THE BELGRADE MEETING ENDED, DURING A PERIOD OF DIFFICULT U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS MARKED BY SOVIET POLITICAL TRIALS AND ACCUSATIONS OF U.S. INTERFERENCE IN SOVIET INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

3. MOST WESTERN OBSERVERS, INCLUDING THIS EMBASSY, HAVE GENERALLY ACCEPTED AS GIVEN THAT THE LEVEL OF JEWISH EMIGRATION IS MONITORED AT A FAIRLY HIGH LEVEL BY THE CENTRAL LEADERSHIP AND MANIPULATED FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES. IF THIS IS SO, A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE OR DECREASE SHOULD BE LOOKED AT AS A POSSIBLE SIGNAL FROM THE LEADERSHIP. INTERPRETING THE CURRENT INCREASE IN JEWISH EMIGRATION, AT LEAST IN TERMS OF SOVIET RELATIONS WITH THE WEST, AND PARTICULARLY WITH THE U.S., HAS BEEN DIFFICULT BECAUSE THE INCREASE HAS BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY SUCH SEEMINGLY CONTRADICTORY PHENOMENA AS THE PAUCITY OF RESOLUTIONS OF WELL-KNOWN LONG-TIME REFUSENIK

CASES AND THE IMPRISONMENT AND HARSH SENTENCES  
GIVEN TO WELL-KNOWN REFUSENIKS AND HUMAN RIGHTS  
ACTIVISTS.

4. REFUSENIKS WITH WHOM WE HAVE DISCUSSED THIS  
ISSUE HAVE SUGGESTED AN ALTERNATE EXPLANATION  
FOR THE INCREASED EMIGRATION, WHICH WE DO NOT ACCEPT  
COMPLETELY, BUT WHICH MAKES SOME PERSUASIVE POINTS.  
THEY ARGUE THAT THE CURRENT INCREASE IS NOT A  
SIGNAL BY THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP, BUT A RESPONSE TO

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 MOSCOW 21752

THE PRESSURE OF GREATLY INCREASED APPLICATIONS FOR  
EXIT PERMISSION. SOVIET JEWS, THEY SAY, SELDOM  
COME TO A SNAP DECISION TO EMIGRATE. THEY MAY  
THINK ABOUT THE  
MATTER FOR YEARS BEFORE, SEEKING AN ISRAELI "VYZOV"  
(I.E., AN INVITATION FROM AN ISRAELI RELATIVE, OR  
AN ISRAELI CITIZEN WHO PRETENDS TO BE ONE), AT A  
MOMENT THAT SEEMS PROPITIOUS TO THEM. AFTER HAVING

OBTAINED THE VYZOV, THEY FREQUENTLY HOLD IT FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME BEFORE, AGAIN AT WHAT SEEMS TO THEM A PROPITIOUS MOMENT, MAKING APPLICATION FOR EXIT PERMISSION. THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT, CONFIDENTIAL

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ACCORDING TO THE REASONING OF OUR SOURCES, CAUSED MANY JEWS TO MOVE FROM THINKING ABOUT EMIGRATION TO SEEKING VYZOV AND, LATER, APPLYING FOR EXIT PERMISSION.

5. FACED WITH A LARGE INCREASE IN EXIT PERMISSION APPLICATIONS, THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES HAVE THE ALTERNATIVES OF PERMITTING EITHER A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN EMIGRATION OR A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN THE SIZE OF THE JEWISH REFUSENIK POPULATION. THROUGH BUREAUCRATIC TECHNICALITIES THEY MAY DELAY THE CHOICE, BUT IF APPLICATIONS INCREASE THEY MUST EVENTUALLY FACE IT. SUCH A MOMENT OCCURRED, OUR SOURCES BELIEVE, DURING THE SUMMER OF 1977. THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP WAS NOT PREPARED FOR THE POTENTIAL SOCIAL PROBLEMS CAUSED BY A SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASED REFUSENIK POPULATION AND DECIDED, THEREFORE, TO ALLOW INCREASED EMIGRATION.

6. THERE IS SOME LOGIC TO THIS VIEWPOINT. JEWISH EMIGRATION DURING THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS HAS BEEN PREDOMINANTLY FROM THE MAJOR URBAN CENTERS OF MOSCOW, LENINGRAD, KIEV AND ODESSA. TO HOLD BACK EMIGRATION IN THE FACE OF INCREASING NUMBERS OF APPLICATIONS WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY REQUIRE TOLERATING LARGER REFUSENIK COMMUNITIES IN THOSE CITIES. THE RELATIVELY SMALL REFUSENIK COMMUNITIES NOW EXISTING IN MOSCOW AND LENINGRAD HAVE DEMONSTRATED THE SOCIAL CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH SUCH COMMUNITY FORMATION, PROBLEMS WHICH WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY BE EXACERBATED IF THE COMMUNITIES GREW SUBSTANTIALLY.

7. WE ARE ALSO INCLINED TO AGREE THAT APPLICATIONS CONFIDENTIAL

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MAY HAVE RISEN SHARPLY IN THE PAST TWO YEARS, STIMULATED IN PART BY THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT AND THE BELGRADE REVIEW CONFERENCE, BUT ALSO BY THE FACT THAT, AS OTHER REFUSENIK SOURCES HAVE TOLD US, THE IMMEDIATE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES ASSOCIATED WITH

EMIGRATION APPLICATIONS HAVE DIMINISHED SINCE THE EARLY YEARS OF SIGNIFICANT JEWISH EMIGRATION. WHILE HARASSMENT MAY STILL BE A SIGNIFICANT DETERRENT IN ISOLATED COMMUNITIES, APPLICANTS FROM URBAN AREAS ARE NOW MUCH LESS LIKELY TO SUFFER LOSS OF JOBS AND APARTMENTS. (COMMENT: SOME LONG-TIME REFUSENIKS, AWARE THAT ALMOST ALL FIRST-TIME APPLICANTS ARE RECEIVING EXIT PERMISSION AND THAT FAR FEWER ARE SUFFERING JOB AND HOUSING HARASSMENT, HAVE VERY AMBIVALENT FEELINGS ABOUT THIS LATEST WAVE OF EMIGRANTS, SEEING THEM AS MOTIVATED SIMPLY BY OPPORTUNISM AND AS UNAWARE OF THE SACRIFICES BY IMPRISONED REFUSENIKS WHICH, THESE REFUSENIKS BELIEVE, HAVE SMOOTHED THE WAY FOR THOSE NOW DEPARTING. ONE RECENTLY TOLD US THAT MANY CURRENT EMIGRANTS BELIEVE THAT IF SHCHARANSKIY WAS FOUND GUILTY, HE MUST HAVE DONE SOMETHING.)

8. OUR REFUSENIK SOURCES, BEARING IN MIND THE TIME LAG BETWEEN THE FIRST STEPS TO OBTAIN A VYZOV, THE APPLICATION FOR EXIT PERMISSION AND ACTUAL DEPARTURE, BELIEVE IT QUITE POSSIBLE THAT EMIGRATION FIGURES MAY SOON DECREASE AS THE EFFECTS OF THE SHCHARANSKIY ARREST, TRIAL AND CONVICTION APPEAR AT THE EXIT END OF THE EMIGRATION PIPELINE. WE ARE NOT SURE. IF THE VAST MAJORITY OF FIRST-TIME APPLICANTS ARE NOW RECEIVING PERMISSION, AS SEEMS

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TO BE THE CASE, AND IF THE SHORT-TERM COSTS OF  
APPLYING HAVE BEEN REDUCED, AS WE HAVE BEEN TOLD,  
THE GREAT BULK OF POTENTIAL APPLICANTS MAY BE  
MORE INFLUENCED BY THESE IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATIONS  
THAN BY THE PLIGHT OF A REFUSENIK ACTIVIST WHOSE  
BEHAVIOR THEY HAVE NO INTENTION OF EMULATING.

9. WE RECOGNIZE THAT THE BOTTOM LINE IS STILL THAT  
THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP HAS THE CAPACITY TO MANIPULATE  
EMIGRATION RATES UP OR DOWN, PARTICULARLY IN THE  
SHORT RUN, TO SUPPORT ITS POLITICAL OBJECTIVES. THE  
REFUSENIK ARGUMENT HIGHLIGHTS, HOWEVER, THE SIGNIFI-  
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CANT COSTS ENTAILED IN A DECISION TO RESTRICT EMI-  
GRATION IN THE FACE OF RISING APPLICATIONS FROM  
URBAN JEWS. THESE COSTS MAY BE HIGH ENOUGH TO  
ACT AS A DETERRENT TO A DECISION TO CUT BACK AGAIN  
TO THE 1975/76 JEWISH EMIGRATION LEVELS. GARRISON

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** JEWS, EMIGRANTS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 11 sep 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
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DRAMATIC  
**TAGS:** PINT, SHUM, UR, CSCE  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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